Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) Tip Sheet
Updated February 2026

Important update on OHMS and Aviary - Read first!

OHMS Integration with Aviary, launched September 2023

The Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) Application is now integrated into the Aviary platform. Key points for users:

- First: OHMS is still OHMS. The tool continues to be called OHMS, even though the OHMS Application is now part of the Aviary platform.
- Second: This change does not impact the OHMS Viewer. The Viewer functions the same way it always has. The OHMS Application—the tool used for back-end work such as indexing and synchronizing transcripts—is what has been incorporated into Aviary. You will still export the same OHMS XML files, which continue to work with the OHMS Viewer as before.
- Third: Although Aviary is a subscription-based platform, OHMS continues to be freely available. A full-featured OHMS account remains free to use. This commitment was written into the license agreement as part of the integration.
- Fourth: The OHMS Application has a new interface and includes additional features. Some terminology has changed, but the core concepts and workflows remain largely the same. Users familiar with OHMS prior to integration should find the overall approach recognizable.
- Fifth: The OHMS Viewer remains open source. In addition, the OHMS Application code is now publicly available via GitHub as part of the Aviary platform, making it possible for organizations to deploy their own instance of Aviary and OHMS locally if desired.

Updated documentation, recorded webinars, and training materials are available through Digital Omnium and the OHMS website.

OHMS Tip Sheet

Below you will find basic information, tips, and resources for getting started with OHMS.

WHAT IT IS

The Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) is a free tool that synchronizes text with audio and video online. Users work in the OHMS Application (the "back end") to connect audiovisual (A/V) recordings with transcripts and/or indexes. The result is shared through the OHMS Viewer (the "front end"), where the public can interact with the media—listening or watching the recording while reading, searching, and navigating through synchronized text.

OHMS is predominantly designed for use with oral history recordings but can be used with any audio or video files.

WHAT OHMS IS NOT

A repository.
OHMS is not a system for storing or preserving media files. Its primary purpose is access: bringing together metadata, transcripts, and indexes with audio or video content. Audio and video files must be hosted elsewhere, and OHMS must be directed to where those files are located.

WHAT OHMS WORKS WITH

This is a non-exhaustive list of tools and platforms that have been used successfully with OHMS in a variety of ways.

Back-end media hosting (where your files live)

These are streaming services commonly used with OHMS. Media can also be linked via direct URLs.

- YouTube
- Kaltura
- Avalon
- Brightcove
- SoundCloud
- Aviary
  Note: The OHMS Application is now accessed through the Aviary platform, but OHMS projects may reference media hosted either in Aviary or on other supported platforms.

Front-end access (public-facing platforms)

The OHMS Viewer is designed to be universally compatible and interoperable and can be embedded in a wide range of content management systems (CMS). The Viewer is also customizable.

Examples of platforms commonly used with the OHMS Viewer include:

- [Omeka](#)
- [WordPress](#)
- [CONTENTdm](#)

FIRST STEPS

- Talk to your IT team or project team about available resources and capacity for implementing OHMS (see "Tips" below).
- [Request a free OHMS account.](#) The individual who creates the repository is automatically assigned as the Repository Administrator. Additional user roles can be assigned once the repository is established.
- Decide on an [indexing level](#) (see OHMS Indexing Levels: [Level 1](#), [Level 2](#), [Level 3](#)) and/or a controlled vocabulary appropriate for your organization or project.
- Select metadata fields beyond the required fields, if applicable, and establish consistency across interviews or collections.

TIPS

- Join the OHMS Google Group. It remains an active forum for announcements, questions, and peer support.
- Talk to your IT team early. Your IT staff or web developer will best understand your organization's technical capacity and website environment. Making decisions about OHMS workflows before consulting them can lead to communication challenges or project delays.
- If you don't have an IT team: OHMS is a web-based application and requires no additional software to use. Many organizations without dedicated technical staff have successfully implemented OHMS using available documentation, guides, and tutorials. While the system may feel complex at first, there are many examples and community resources available to support new users.

RESOURCES

- OHMS Homepage: https://www.oralhistoryonline.org/
- [OHMS User Guide](#)
- [Digital Omnium OHMS Archives](#): A collection of current and historical posts, announcements, and guidance related to OHMS.
- "[OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History for Free](#)" - An introductory article from Oral History in the Digital Age outlining the goals and uses of OHMS.